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SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA II

Letter dated 2 December 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I am pleased to transmit herewith the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, at the conclusion of the Fourth Humanitarian Conference on Somalia, convened at Addis Ababa from 29 November to 1 December 1993 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the press statement circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 100 and 137.

(Signed) Fesseha A. TESSEMA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia at Addis Ababa on 2 December 1993

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia wishes to make the following comments on the outcome of the Fourth Humanitarian Conference on Somalia, convened at Addis Ababa from 29 November to 1 December 1993.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia has over the previous months been trying to help in the search for solutions to the problem in Somalia in close collaboration with the international community in general and the United Nations in particular. It is widely known that we have held, from time to time, different opinions on the best way forward, and, at times, our attempts at coordinating our activities with those playing the major role in Somalia have not been exactly easy. None the less, we continued to persevere, both in the efforts to assist in the search for peace in Somalia and in closely coordinating our activities with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

It was in the same spirit that we had approached the Fourth Humanitarian Conference on Somalia and we were gratified that, once again, the international community has shown its commitment to assist Somalia in its hour of need by holding the Conference.

At this Conference the international community made it clear that it is committed to assisting Somalis provided that they guarantee security in the districts, regions and, hopefully, in their country as a whole.

In this context, Ethiopia appreciates the determination of the donor community to help Somalia, and applauds its commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to any part of Somalia that guarantees stability and willingness to cooperate with all forces that are prepared to contribute towards that end, as well as fulfil certain other criteria related to the donor country's endeavours to provide assistance for relief and rehabilitation.

Ethiopia is convinced that the relief and rehabilitation assistance programme and the process of political reconciliation should proceed in parallel, but in mutually reinforcing tracks. It is the opinion of the Transitional Government that, in view of the difficulties that the political process has encountered, it would be unwise and inappropriate to mix the two, conceptually and institutionally, and doing so would endanger the success of the rehabilitation and relief programme and would also affect negatively the political process, rather than making a positive contribution to that effort.

It is with this in mind that the Ethiopian delegation insisted that the Conference:

(a) Refrain from calling for the creation of institutions that could be controversial and may not, in any case, be necessary for the success of the programme;

(b) Desist from putting additional burdens on UNOSOM and all its institutions whose task of promoting political reconciliation and of providing security for humanitarian assistance is already proving to be a very challenging one indeed;

(c) Explicitly mandate the international non-governmental organizations with the right experience to act on behalf of the donors in the day-to-day implementation of the relief and rehabilitation programme.

In this regard, while the Ethiopian delegation at the Conference was convinced that these concerns of Ethiopia were shared fully by the donor community, it is none the less obvious now that the declaration that came out at the end of the Conference does not fully and unequivocally address those concerns.

Hence, while Ethiopia shares fully the aims of the donor community, it is, however, of the conviction that the declaration in its present form, and as it stands now, is likely to leave room for misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and may lead to the failure of the programme even before it takes off the ground.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia therefore calls on the relevant bodies to clarify these critical aspects of the declaration with a view to addressing the concerns raised by Ethiopia, concerns that Ethiopia believes are shared by the donor community.

In view of the very critical nature of the matter raised here for making progress in Somalia, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia wishes to make it known that Ethiopia will be unable to cooperate in the implementation of the programme until such a clarification is provided.